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U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

Central African Republic – Complex Emergency

Situation Report #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2007

September 28, 2007

Note: The last fact sheet was dated March 1, 2007.

BACKGROUND

Increasing violence between the government and armed opposition groups, as well as insecurity attributed to Chadian and Sudanese opposition forces and widespread banditry, have displaced an estimated 290,000 people, including 212,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Central African Republic (CAR) and 78,000 refugees in Chad and Cameroon. The 2003 military coup that brought current president Francis Bozizé to power resulted in extensive displacement and damage to infrastructure across the north. Recent violence has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities in the most affected prefectures of Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Gribingui, Haute-Kotto, Vakaga, and Bamingui-Bangoran. However, the impact of insecurity in the region is uneven, ranging from normalcy in many areas to the razing of villages and displacement in others. Since the February 2007 peace agreement, the Government of CAR and the two main armed opposition groups have made halting progress toward implementation of the accord.

On January 31, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires A. James Panos declared a disaster in response to the increasing humanitarian needs in the country and requested assistance from USAID/OFDA. In FY 2007, the USG has provided more than \$21 million in humanitarian assistance to support agriculture and food security, economy and market systems, coordination, health, logistics, food assistance, water, sanitation, and hygiene programming.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
IDPs	212,000	U.N. Consolidated Appeals Process Mid-Year Review – July 2007
CAR Refugees	78,000	U.N. Consolidated Appeals Process Mid-Year Review – July 2007
Total Affected Population	1 million	U.N. Consolidated Appeals Process Mid-Year Review – July 2007

FY 2007 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

USAID/OFDA Assistance to CAR.....	\$5,231,401
USAID/FFP¹ Assistance to CAR	\$14,158,700
STATE/PRM² Assistance to CAR.....	\$1,689,950
TOTAL USAID and State Humanitarian Assistance to CAR.....	\$21,080,051

CURRENT SITUATION

From July 19 to August 4, a USAID/OFDA regional advisor traveled to Bamingui, Ouham, Ouham Pendé, and Bossembele prefectures to reassess conditions since February 2007. The regional advisor found an improving humanitarian situation, with IDPs cautiously returning to their villages and resuming normal livelihood activities. An expanding international presence in CAR appears to have facilitated IDP returns, although insecurity continues to threaten improved humanitarian conditions.

Displaced Populations

When the USAID/OFDA Assessment Team traveled to CAR in February 2007, most displaced communities had abandoned their homes and fled to forests or agricultural areas near their villages. However, in July 2007, the USAID/OFDA regional advisor noted that several previously abandoned roadside villages were now inhabited. Returning populations were reconstructing grass roofs, making bricks, clearing bush that had overgrown residential areas, and planting crops. Populations cited local security improvements

and the presence and assistance from international relief agencies as the reason for their return. However, the recently returned villagers remain prepared to flee again, as they continue to maintain huts and water points and are cultivating crops in remote areas hidden from military forces and local bandits.

In August 2007, in response to continuing needs in CAR, USAID/OFDA coordinated a second airlift of emergency relief supplies, including plastic sheeting and soap, valued at nearly \$180,000. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) distributed the relief commodities to assist 4,000 IDP families. The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) supports programs for the protection and assistance of conflict victims in CAR through UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as well as efforts to protect and assist a recent influx of approximately 3,000 Darfur refugees into eastern CAR.

¹ USAID's Office of Food for Peace

² U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration

Security and Access

Insecurity in northwestern and northeastern CAR remains a significant concern for relief agencies. In June 2007, an armed opposition group killed an expatriate staff member of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) working in Ouham-Pende Prefecture. Government forces and armed opposition groups have pledged to allow unrestricted access to relief agencies. Currently the greatest risk to humanitarian personnel is increased activity of *coupeurs de route*, or road bandits. Originating from Chad or southern CAR, these armed bandits chronically raid villages to steal food or possessions and have recently begun to target non-governmental organization (NGO) convoys.

According to USAID/OFDA field staff, insecurity remains the greatest risk to the humanitarian situation of local populations. A renewal of fighting between government forces and armed opposition groups, or surge in attacks by bandits, could easily cause nervous populations to return to hiding and undermine humanitarian progress from recent months. For example, in late August 2007, banditry and fighting between government forces and armed opposition groups led an estimated 7,000 people to flee their homes between the towns of Markounda and Silambi, Ouham Prefecture, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). However, USAID/OFDA partners report that most IDPs have since returned, enabling relief activities to resume.

In FY 2007, USAID/OFDA provided \$250,000 to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) for humanitarian air operations to transport personnel and relief supplies to inaccessible areas in CAR. USAID/OFDA's contribution avoided a disruption to air operations, ensuring continuous assistance to populations in need.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

As of February 2007, many of northern CAR's hand-pumped wells were under-producing or inoperable. In response, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$250,000 to the International Partnership for Human Development (IPHD) for the repair of hand-pumps and well heads. Approximately 200,000 people benefited from these interventions. During the August 2007 assessment, the USAID/OFDA regional advisor noted that water points in all of the villages visited were functioning and that lines were minimal. Moreover, the MSF/Holland Director in Markounda town reported that MSF teams had seen a decrease in hygiene-related diseases, such as skin rashes and conjunctivitis, and attributed this in part to the return of IDPs to villages with clean water wells.

Food Security and Agriculture

Although insecurity and the ongoing destruction of seed stocks and tools have threatened agricultural production, farmers in CAR continue to have access to sufficient land to plant crops. USAID/OFDA provided \$900,000 to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to distribute seeds and tools prior to the April planting

season. Approximately 26,000 families benefited from FAO's distribution. In addition, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) received more than \$670,000 to implement agriculture, food security, and livelihoods activities. According to the USAID/OFDA regional advisor, the seeds were received in all areas; the corn, sorghum, and beans were planted on time; and all crops were doing well. Local farmers anticipated surplus production, which will likely be used to replenish seed stocks or for trade in neighboring Chad.

WFP is working to supplement available food stocks in northern CAR. However, insecurity, poor roads, and a shortage of available commercial trucks are hindering distribution. In FY 2007, USAID/FFP provided 14,866 metric tons (MT) of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance, valued at \$14.1 million, for WFP programs in northern CAR.

Health and Nutrition

Prior to the current crisis, the health care system in CAR collapsed due to inadequate government funding and capacity; recent insecurity and staff departures have further weakened the system. Although MSF and Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) continued to provide emergency services, additional health actors were necessary to meet emergency needs. In response, USAID/OFDA provided Merlin, International Medical Corps (IMC), IRC, and the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) with more than \$1.5 million to provide emergency medical services to an estimated 130,000 conflict-affected persons in northern CAR.

Due to the lack of comprehensive malnutrition data for CAR, USAID/OFDA funded food security and water, sanitation, and hygiene assessments to enable humanitarian partners to appropriately target relief activities. According to implementing partner ACF, global acute malnutrition rates remain well below emergency thresholds.

Coordination and Response Capacity

According to USAID field staff, response and coordination capacity in CAR are gradually improving as increased funding and staff are made available. In the last six months, the U.N. has established weekly coordination meetings in Bangui, the capital of CAR. In FY 2007, USAID/OFDA provided \$250,000 to OCHA to enhance coordination capacity and response.

USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
ACF	Agriculture and Food Security, Economy and Market Systems, Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Ouham, Ouham-Pendé	\$672,642
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Bamingui-Bangoran, Vakaga	\$900,000
IMC	Health	Vakaga	\$304,257
IRC	Health, Shelter and Settlements	Grinbingui	\$824,182
IPHD	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Bamingui-Bangoran, Vakaga	\$249,222
Merlin	Health	Grinbingui	\$1,053,603
OCHA	Coordination	Countrywide	\$250,000
Multiple	Emergency Relief Supplies	Northern CAR	\$589,370
WFP	Logistics	Northern CAR	\$250,000
WHO	Health	Northern CAR	\$125,000
	Administrative Costs	Countrywide	\$13,125
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$5,231,401
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE²			
WFP	14,866 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$14,158,700
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$14,158,700
STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE			
UNHCR	Support for new Darfur Refugees	Countrywide	\$200,000
UNHCR	IDP Programs	Countrywide	\$170,000
ICRC	Programs for Conflict Victims	Countrywide	\$1,000,000
IMC	Emergency Health for new Darfur Refugees	Countrywide	\$300,000
U.S. Embassy	Healthcare to Urban Refugees	Countrywide	\$19,950
TOTAL STATE/PRM			\$1,689,950
TOTAL USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CAR IN FY 2007			\$21,080,051

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 28, 2007.² Estimated value of food assistance.


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